

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 22 May 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(121) Output 1.1: Migration and Temporary Entry

Senator Carr asked:

Is it true that DIMA has recently issued an urgent instruction to its officers to concentrate more heavily on compliance issues and prosecutions for breaches under the visa 456 and 457 programs? If so, why has it done this?

Answer:

The Department takes all allegations very seriously. With the recent increase in allegations regarding temporary visa holders reported, officers were instructed to give greater priority to investigating these allegations. The Department also works with other state and federal agencies to investigate the allegations. For example, as part of the recent Council of Australian Governments decision, DIMA is co-ordinating establishment of Commonwealth/State working groups in each state to better co-ordinate efforts in dealing with the allegations.

Research has shown that the subclass 457 visa is highly beneficial. In order to ensure we continue to reap the benefits, it is important that allegations are investigated quickly so that the reputation of the vast bulk of employers who use the visa and do nothing wrong is not improperly impugned.